Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

      Claims 1-21(canceled, without prejudice).

      Claim 22 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, comprising the steps of:

            receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, a call originated from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network, the voice terminal being communicatively connected to the gateway for communication to the gateway of the call, the call comprising a call initiation information and the call initiation information comprising a call destination identifier originated from the voice terminal;

            packetizing the call initiation information at the gateway;

            directing the packetized call initiation information over the packet–switched network to a centralized authentication service connected to the gateway by the packet-switched network, ~~and thereby establishing a communicative connection between~~ <u>to communicatively connect</u> the gateway and the authentication service via the packet-switched network <u>per network protocols</u>;

            upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the <u>call</u> ~~communicative connection of the packet-switched network~~ <u>from</u> ~~between the gateway and~~ the authentication service<u>, by hand-off of the call to the packet-switched network</u>;

routing the call by the packet-switched network per network protocols, via a network address for the call destination identifier, after the step of dissociating if authentication succeeds;

connecting the call, by the packet-switched network per network protocols via the network address for the call destination identifier, between the gateway and a target device of the call destination identifier; and

wherein the steps of routing and connecting the call by the packet-switched network per network protocols, employ the packetized call initiation information, including the call destination identifier, to effect the call between the target device and the gateway.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream including encoded voice-band traffic, the information stream comprising a destination identifier for a target device for voice traffic between the gateway and the target device;

directing the information stream over the packet–switched network to an authentication service;

authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service;

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upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information stream from the authentication service <u>by hand-off to the packet-switched network by the authentication service</u>;

routing, via the packet-switched network <u>to the target device of the destination identifier via a network address for the target device,</u> ~~independent of the authentication service,~~ a next information stream including encoded voice-band traffic, to establish a connection over the packet-switched network between the target device, the routing effected by the packet-switched network based, at least in part, on the destination identifier; and

receiving at the target device the next information stream via the packet-switched network;

<u>wherein the step of routing is controlled by the packet-switched network, to communicatively connect the target device via the network address to the gateway</u>.

Claim 24 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, comprising the steps of:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream representable by encoded voice-band traffic, the information stream originating from a voice terminal communicatively connected to the gateway and the information stream comprising an identifier of a second voice terminal;

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directing an encoded voice-band traffic, corresponding to at least a portion of the information stream, over the packet–switched network to an authentication service;

authenticating the voice terminal via the encoded voice-band traffic;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the communicative connection between the authentication service and the gateway by hand-off of the encoded voice-band traffic to the packet-switched network;

next directing the encoded voice-band traffic over the packet-switched network to a target device, wherein the packet-switched network, not the authentication service, routes the encoded voice-band traffic of effects the step of next directing via the identifier for the second voice terminal;

further receiving at the gateway a next information stream representable by next encoded voice-band traffic, the next information stream originating from the voice terminal communicatively connected to the gateway;

next directing at least a portion of the a next encoded voice-band traffic, corresponding to at least a portion of the next information stream, by over the packet-switched network to the target device via the identifier, as so dissociated from the communicative connection between the authentication service and the gateway;

receiving at least a portion of the next information stream at the second voice terminal communicatively connected to the target device, over the packet-switched network the second voice terminal for the receipt is dictated based on the identifier.

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Claims 25-28 (canceled, without prejudice).

Claim 29 (previously presented):   The method of claim 22, wherein the call initiation information comprises a telephone number of the target device.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The method of claim 29, wherein the telephone number is a PSTN call number and the target device is a second voice terminal.

Claim 31 (currently amended): The method of claim 22, wherein the target device is a second gateway, communicatively ~~communicably~~ connected to a second voice terminal.

Claim 32 (previously presented):   The method of claim 31, wherein the call initiation information comprises a telephone number of the second voice terminal and the second voice terminal is communicatively connected outside the packet-switched network to the second gateway.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The method of claim 23, wherein the next information stream includes the destination identifier.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of:

    communicatively connecting a recipient voice terminal to the target device, based on the destination identifier.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of:

receiving a voice message at the recipient voice terminal, corresponding to at least a portion of the next information stream.

Claim 36 (new): A method of servicing a packetized data voice call made over a packet-switched network, the network routes the packetized data voice call per network protocols and addresses, comprising the steps of:

initiating the packetized data voice call at a gateway to the network, the voice call includes an identifier of a call recipient;

directing the packetized data voice call via the network, from the gateway to a service authenticator;

authenticating the voice call by the service authenticator, based on a caller information from the gateway;

handing-off the voice call by the service authenticator, to the network;

routing the voice call by the network, from the gateway to a destination address of the network for the identifier; and

connecting the call between the gateway and the destination address by the packet-switched network via the destination address.